

Spectrum

Augusta shows service members appreciation

Larry Edmond
Signal editor

Thunder Over Augusta was an event that brought a shower of good will to the Augusta community May 17.

Sometimes an event that sounds good in concept strikes a sour note in the execution. Many times a scheme that looks great on the drawing board zeroes out on the playing field.

Held in several areas in the downtown area, Thunder Over Augusta, was an event designed to show a community's support for service members.

It 'sounded' like the thing to do.

Organizers and everyone who joined the effort to show the military community in Augusta how much they are appreciated, agreed it was a good idea.

In the end, with dedicated effort from both sides of the event--the military and the civilian community, an exceptional program unfolded.

Military units from around the country turned out in force to demonstrate the pride they have in their training, their organizations and their chosen profession.

Community members from

every neighborhood in the Central Savannah River Area and from every segment of the region's populace, joined together to make their presence felt.

Current and former service members mingled together to bask in the appreciative flood of affection poured onto them.

From the youngest to the oldest, there was something for everyone.

Thunder Over Augusta was an event that hit the mark in a way that exceeded even the most optimistic predictions.

It is noteworthy that Wounded service members and their Families were afforded the very impor-

tant person treatment throughout the event.

Lee Greenwood, recording star, sprinted to meet the bus bringing Wounded Warriors to the parking lot beside the VIP tent. Greenwood shook hands with the Wounded Warriors as they stepped down from the bus.

Speaking for the Fort Gordon community at the opening ceremony, Brig. Gen. Jeffrey

Foley, U.S. Army Signal Center and Fort Gordon commanding general, thanked the organizers and sponsors for their hard work and support of the event, including: Donnie Thompson, Windsor Jewelers; Dale Phelon, E. Phelon Company, Inc.; Andy Jones, Gerald Jones Dealer Group; Jeff and Joey Hadden, Phoenix Commercial Printers; Roger Leon, Husqvarna Out-

door Products; William Morris, The Augusta Chronicle; Abu Kan, Comcast; and Yolanda Marshall and Misty Sroczyński, City of Augusta Special Events Office.

Included in this edition of the Signal are several pages of photographs covering a portion of the many events and people participating in this appreciation to service members.

“My husband, who is a vet and also on oxygen, just got home home from Thunder Over Augusta. Kudos, kudos, kudos! My husband does not get out much due to his health limitations but I urged him to go downtown today. It was a truly wonderful day. The fireworks presentation finale was the best we have ever witnessed and we are both 50+ and have traveled all over. The military presence was very impressive and comforting. Please convey our most sincere gratitude to the organizers and supporters of this event. With true appreciation of what being an American costs and the value of our military's contribution to that privilege, once again, thanks to one and all.”

Mike and Sue Norman
Edgefield County residents



Photo by Bonnie Heater

(Above) Lee Greenwood, recording artist, greets Spc. Jacob Dutro and other Wounded Warriors as they arrive at the Thunder Over Augusta military appreciation event in Augusta, May 17. (Right) Medal of Honor winner, retired Marine Col. Wesley Fox and Brig. Gen. Jeffrey Foley, U.S. Army Signal Center and Fort Gordon commanding general, salute as Jaycie Ward, Beach Island, S.C. resident 10-year-old vocalist dynamo, sings the National Anthem at the opening ceremony of the day-long series of events. (More photographs on page 10 and 11.)



Photo by Bonnie Heater



Photo by Siobhan Carlike

(Above) Brig. Gen. Jeffrey Foley, U.S. Army Signal Center and Fort Gordon commanding general, presents a certificate of appreciation to the Old Guard following their performance at the opening ceremony of the Thunder Over Augusta event. (Below) A Fort Gordon honor guard presents the colors at the opening ceremony.



Photo by Mercedes Ballard-White



Photo by Capt. Michael Greenberger

(Above) Mikey Greenberger gets a close look at the pilot's view in an Apache helicopter. (Right) A young boy strains to squeeze one more pull-up to show the Marines he can measure up to their standard.

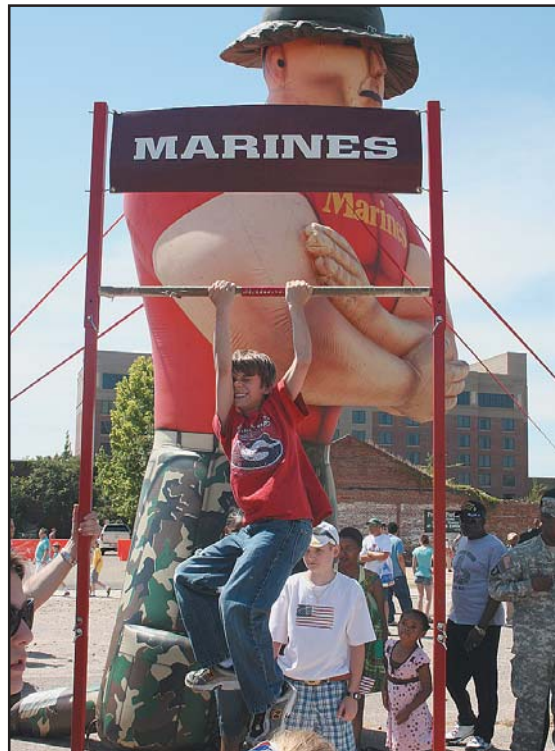


Photo by Capt. Michael Greenberger